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Front Edit Other
Page Page Page

Date:

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Big For Its Britches

No man in American life probably has a greater interest in the work and the job record of the central intelligence agency than former President Harry S. Truman. He established it.

So when Truman writes in a copyrighted article for the Hearst newspapers that he is becoming increasingly concerned about the agency's drift to "peacetime cloak and dagger operations," both the government and the people should listen.

Said Truman:

We have grown up as a nation, respected for our free institutions and for our ability to maintain a free and open society. There is something about the way the CIA has been functioning that is casting a shadow over our historic position and I feel that we need to correct it.

The history of the CIA since the Truman administration urgently supports his concern. It is like a creature which feeding upon its own milk has swelled into a gargantuan thing. It has invaded the policy making domain of the executive branch of the government and has become a private police force, judge and advocate.

The government should turn back to the original concept of the CIA as envisioned and created by HST.

Early in his presidency Truman learned a president can operate intelligently only if the information upon which he frames his decisions is complete and accurate. He needs up to the minute data on all global points, free from departmental interpretations calculated to support a given position or to shield the president from unpleasant facts.

So Truman established the CIA to collect intelligence reports from every available source and to be responsible only to the president. He wanted the information in its raw state, as he put it, and to be free to base his judgments on unadulterated facts.

For Truman the concept worked. The CIA remained just an information gathering agency. He never permitted it to get bigger than that.

Today the CIA has become a symbol internationally for a super cloak and dagger operation which not only gathers information but recommends and in instances virtually establishes policy. Truman is disturbed over this as are all sound thinking persons concerned with any super agency and its inevitable super state instincts.

Return the CIA to its original concept—that of a data gathering group of experts charged with getting information so the president can do his homework intelligently, decisively and capably.